

Every Child Learning Every Day



March 2004

An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

Volume 3, Issue 3

READY TO LEARN

Try these Seuss titles

This month popular children's book writer Theodor Geisel, better known to millions around the world as Dr. Seuss, would have celebrated his 100th birthday. Across the nation, community groups are celebrating the event.

Most folks are familiar with "Cat in the Hat" and the "Green Eggs and Ham," but Dr. Seuss wrote many more books worth sharing with preschoolers.

Try these titles for some fun read alouds:

"Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?"

"There's a Wocket in My Pocket!"

"The Shape of Me and Other Stuff"

"The Eye Book"

"The Tooth Book"

"The Foot Book"

"Happy Birthday to You"

"Dr. Seuss's ABC: 'An Amazing Alphabet Book!'"

Several groups have produced activities and games centered on Dr. Seuss' stories.

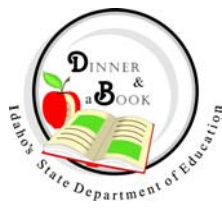
Check out these links:

The National Education Association: www.nea.org

The Office Dr. Seuss website: www.seussville.com

The Children's Museum of Manhattan: <http://www.cmom.org/index.html>

The Geisel Library at the University of San Diego: <http://libraries.ucsd.edu/services/info/struct.html>



Readiness Program Expands

Dear Reader:

During the past seven years, the State Department of Education has been working to help improve the connections with parents of preschoolers and the folks who provide early childhood education.

We received national recognition for one of the efforts: our early childhood learning standards. These standards, developed by Idaho educators and parents, lead directly to our academic standards for older students. These are available online at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/SpecialEd/docs/content/IdahoEarlyLearningStandards.doc>

Another effort is this monthly newsletter which is distributed to more than 10,000 Idaho parents.

Six years ago, I launched my "Dinner and a Book" initiative to let parents know that one of the most important things they can do is to read to their children every day and



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

spend time each night talking to their children around the dinner table. You can learn more about it at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/>

DinnerandaBook/.

Now we're expanding our department's support for parents and early childhood educators through a staff member, Maria Delgado, who will work on "school readiness" issues.

Maria is meeting with groups, sharing the department's preschool resources, and helping all of us focus on this exciting area with so much potential.

I invite parents and early childhood education providers to contact Maria at Mdelgado@sde.state.id.us with questions or ideas.

Maria and I both look forward to hearing from you as we work to improve the school readiness of Idaho's youngest citizens.

Marilyn Howard

Point out all the words in everyday places

Showing children that words are part of our everyday world is a powerful way to encourage the beginning of word recognition.

Children who are exposed to many different types of print at an early age become comfortable with print and its many uses.

Show your child how important reading and writing are to daily life by pointing out words that you come across throughout the day.

Here are some activities to promote word recognition:

- Show the child stop signs, store names, street signs, familiar company logos, and brand names on cereal and other food packages.

- Make an "I Spy" game out of finding print that your child recognizes in newspaper adver-



tisements, on billboards, and during trips in the car or walks down a city street

- Make a collage with the child

using examples of print from newspapers or magazines that the child recognizes.

- Share with the child the many uses for writing besides books. For example, show birthday cards, invitations, addressed envelopes, shopping lists, instructions for putting together a new toy, and text in a video game or on a trading card.

- Encourage the child to make birthday cards, lists, and signs as part of playtime. Let him or her independently explore how to do it, but provide gentle assistance when asked. Don't worry about what your child actually writes ... letters, scrib-

bles, or pictures are all fine.

Young children delight in rhymes, hidden letters, and tongue twisters. Older kids love plays on meaning and the silly things that can happen when punctuation is missing. Try these books for word play fun.

"On Beyond Zebra," by Dr. Seuss. Readers will recognize the playfulness in this word romp as they venture beyond the letter Z.

"Scranimals" by Jack Prelutsky. On Scranimal Island, there are many creatures that may seem familiar, but are really the product of the imagination.

"There's a Frog in My Throat: 440 Animal Sayings a Little Bird Told Me," by Loreen Leedy. Familiar adages are organized by animal and explained through text and illustrations.



RESOURCES

Plan on switching off your TV

April 19-25, millions of children and adults around the world will turn off their televisions and discover that life without TV may just be more rewarding, fun, and relaxing as part of TV-Turnoff Week 2004.

Why turn off the TV?

Television cuts into family time, can harm our children's ability to read and succeed in school, and contributes to unhealthy lifestyles and obesity.

Here are just a few of the facts:

On average, children in the United States will spend more time in front of the television (1,023 hours) than in school this year (900 hours).

Forty percent of Americans frequently or always watch television during dinner.

As U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher said at the Kick Off of TV-Turnoff Week 2001, "We are raising the most overweight generation of youngsters in American history... This week is about saving lives."

What's so great about TV-Turnoff Week?

Turning off the television gives us a chance to think, read, create, and do. To connect with our families and engage in our communities. To turn off TV and turn on life.

TV-Turnoff Week is supported by more than 70 national organizations including the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Education Association, and President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

TV-Turnoff Week Works! According to hundreds of responses to our TV-Turnoff Week follow-up surveys, 90 percent of responding participants reduced their TV-viewing as a result of participating.

To learn more about what you can do, visit www.tvturnoff.org.

NUTRITION

Make the most out of snack times

Most children like snacks. Snacks should be thought of as mini-meals that provide nutrition and energy for children to grow, play, and learn.

Children have small stomachs. They eat less at meals than adults. Smart snacks help children eat and drink enough during the day.

You can help children snack smart by following these tips:

Young children, and adults,



do best when they eat four to six times a day.

Keep food group snacks handy: for example, raw vegetables, fruit, juice, milk, cheese, yogurt, bread, peanut butter and hard cooked eggs.

Let snacks fill in the gaps. If your child misses juice for breakfast, offer fruit at snack time.

Time snacks carefully -- two to three hours before meals. The snack will not interfere with the appetite for the main meal.

Keep snacks small. Let your child decide how much is enough. Help the child self-regulate and decide how much to eat. A snack

is just a filler -- not another full meal.

Snack wisely yourself. Do you snack when you are tired or bored -- or just when you are hungry? Remember, children learn snack habits by watching you.

Choose snacks with less sugar. Offer milk, juice, or water as snack drinks. Soft drinks and high-sugar fruit drinks can take the place of foods children need to grow and stay healthy.

Make food group foods the usual snacks: milk, fruits in bite-size pieces, berries, cut-up vegetables, string cheese.

READY TO LEARN

Block play builds social, physical, creative skills

The past two newsletters have reviewed the value of blocks as toys for children. This last part, taken from a National Association for the Education of Young Children article, highlights the skills children learn through block play.

Socially — Blocks encourage children to make friends and cooperate and may encourage an older child to work with others in solving problems.

Physically — When children reach for, pick up, stack, or fit blocks together they build strength in



their fingers and hands, and increase eye-hand coordination.

Intellectually — Blocks help children learn across many academic subjects. They develop vocabularies as they learn to describe sizes, shapes, and positions and math skills by grouping, adding and subtracting and eventually multiplying.

Creatively — Blocks offer children the chance to make their own designs, and the satisfaction of creating structures that did not exist before. Children value their creations, so rather than asking a child "What did you make?" say, "Tell me about what you made."

INFORMATION

Make plans to celebrate Children's Day April 30

Idaho was the first state in the nation to have an official Children's Day or El Día de los Niños.

A year ago, the state Legislature designated that April 30 would be an informal holiday to remind Idahoans to value and uplift children.

Because of the holiday's roots in Latin America, many of the U.S. events feature multicultural activities and events.

Two sites to check out include: www.edwardgonzales.com. The New Mexico artist Edward Gonzales has designed several Día de los Niños prints including the one on this page.

The Texas State Library offers many activities for the



holiday on its website: www.tsl.state.tx.us

The site includes several fun and easy songs to sing with young children and includes free audio files to help teach the songs.

Here's one:

"Los Pollitos Dicen, The Baby Chicks Sing," by Nancy Abraham Hall and Jill Syverson-Stork.

English:

Baby chicks say "pio, pio, pio," when they are hungry, when they are cold.

The hen looks for wheat and corn, she gives them their food and she keeps them warm.

Under her two wings tucked in and snuggled tight until the next day they sleep all through the night.

Spanish:

Los pollitos dicen "pio, pio, pio", cuando tienen hambre cuando tienen frío. La gallina busca el maíz y el trigo, les da su comida, y les presta abrigo. Bajo sus dos alas acurrucaditos hasta el otro día duermen los pollitos.